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President: Ms. Chatardová (Vice-President) ..... (Czechia)

Contents

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions

(e) Environment

(h) International cooperation in tax matters

(i) Geospatial information

(k) United Nations Forum on Forests

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In the absence of Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Ms. Chatardová (Czechia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions

(e) Environment

1. **Mr. Ahmad** (Deputy Director, New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)) said that during the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP, more than 120 ministerial-level representatives as well as participants from civil society, major groups, academia, businesses and the scientific community had deliberated on critical environmental challenges and had reviewed the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its relevant linkages.

2. With regard to United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 2/5, UNEP had conducted a mapping of the Sustainable Development Goals and aligned its medium-term strategy for 2018-2021 to the 2030 Agenda. As a custodian agency, UNEP had worked with other United Nations entities to develop and submit relevant indicators required for follow-up and review of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda. UNEP had also provided capacity-building for United Nations country teams and their national counterparts on the integration of the environmental dimension across national policies.

3. UNEP was working with partners to coordinate global efforts to obtain data on progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2016, it had reported to the United Nations Secretary-General on six of the Goals where global data sets were available. UNEP had worked with the United Nations Statistical Division, the regional economic commissions and other entities to help countries develop capacity on environmental statistics with a view to reporting on internationally agreed goals.

4. Other resolutions adopted had covered the topics of oceans and seas; marine plastic, litter and microplastics; and sustainable coral reef management. Collectively, the resolutions addressed the issue of the effective conservation of marine and coastal zones and the achievement of Goal 14.

5. The United Nations Environment Assembly was actively supporting the preparatory process for the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, to be held in June 2017, and continued to support the General Assembly-led process to develop a legally binding international instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. UNEP had recently launched the Clean Seas global campaign on marine litter, aimed at eliminating two of the main sources of ocean trash by 2022, microplastics, which were frequently used in cosmetics, and single-use plastic products such as shopping bags.

6. The United Nations Environment Assembly had also adopted resolutions on a number of key environmental issues that warranted special international focus, including sustainable consumption and production, environmental education, sound management of chemicals and waste, and illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products. UNEP stressed the interlinkages between a healthy environment, human well-being and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and promoted an integrated approach that would contribute to the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. As no single entity could address environmental issues alone, UNEP had entered into more than 100 partnerships with businesses, academia, think tanks, indigenous groups, youth groups and women's organizations.

7. The theme of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly would be "Towards a pollution-free planet". The Assembly would help to generate the necessary political will to identify priority areas and potential solutions to reduce all streams of pollutants in targeted sectors at the local, national and global levels. He called on the Council to take the recommendations of UNEP into account and to integrate the environmental dimension in all its activities.

(b) International cooperation in tax matters (E/2016/45)

Draft resolution: United Nations code of conduct on cooperation in combating international tax evasion

8. **The President** drew attention to the draft resolution entitled "United Nations code of conduct in cooperation on combating international tax evasion", contained in chapter II of the report of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters on its twelfth and thirteenth sessions (E/2016/45).

9. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

10. **The President** said she took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters on its twelfth and thirteenth sessions (E/2016/45).

11. *It was so decided.*

(i) Geospatial information (E/2016/46)

Draft decision: Report of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management on its sixth session and provisional agenda and dates for the seventh session of the Committee

12. **The President** drew attention to the draft decision entitled "Report of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management on its sixth session and provisional agenda and dates for the seventh session of the Committee", contained in chapter I, section A, of the report of the Committee of Experts (E/2016/46).

13. *The draft decision was adopted.*

(k) United Nations Forum on Forests (E/2017/10)

Draft resolution: United Nations strategic plan for forest 2017-2030 and quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2017-2020

14. **The President** drew attention to the draft resolution entitled "United Nations strategic plan for forest 2017-2030 and quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2017-2020", contained in chapter I of the report of the Forum on its 2017 special session (E/2017/10).

15. **Mr. Lawrence** (United States of America) said that the actions contemplated under the plan were voluntary and did not purport to alter or affect rights or obligations under international law. Regarding global forest target 2.2, while his delegation supported efforts to improve the ability of small-scale enterprises to finance their businesses and sell their products, it maintained that the World Trade Organization was the appropriate forum for the negotiation of trade issues. The strategic plan did not represent a commitment to provide new market access for goods and did not interpret or alter any existing World Trade Organization agreements, including the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.

16. The United States disassociated itself from the language used in the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 to refer to technology transfer, most notably as contained in paragraphs 15 and 58 (b) of annex I to the report (E/2017/10).

17. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

18. **The President** said she took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its 2017 special session (E/2017/10).

19. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.